

# THE ADVOCATE

## Why I Come To Work

by Tracy Avent, Court Liaison Specialist

I'm **Tracy Avent** and I am a Court Liaison Specialist. I am assigned to the Judicial Processing Unit where my duties include Court Representation, updating youth offense history, screening of youth who are ordered into detention, and updating the information into the YES System. I am also responsible for releasing committed youth from the adult and juvenile cellblock and the At-Risk Unit to appropriate placements within DYRS or the community. The most rewarding part of my job is when a youth or a parent in the community says to me, "I remember you from the court; thank you for all your help!"

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## Meet the Referral and Utilization Unit

by Linda HarleeHarper, Program Manager of Resource Management and Utilization Division



The Referral and Utilization Unit (from left to right in photo): **Tuwanna Edwards**, Program Support Assistant; **Raymond Milner**, Program Support Assistant; **Lisa Smiley**, Utilization Specialist.

**T**he **Referral and Utilization Unit** is under the **Resource Management and Utilization Division**. It is responsible for managing all referrals to contracted residential and non-residential programs and services, and also for tracking the utilization of contracted programs and services to inform planning and resource allocation. The Unit serves as resource brokers and works closely with care managers to identify suitable contracted service providers, to ensure the least restrictive placement consistent with public safety, and to expedite placement. The team also reports monthly to the **City Administrator** and the **Mayor** on all community and residential placement of youths at DYRS, serves as a liaison between **Court Services Department** and DYRS caseworkers to provide electronic monitoring, and closely tracks youth in residential placement to ensure timely reviews of progress and to reduce unnecessarily long lengths of stay.

## Promotions/New Faces



### **Nkenge Watkins—Program Manager at Renaissance Program**

The Renaissance Program is a 24 hour, seven days a week community-based residential program. It prepares committed males ranging in age from 16 to 21 for entry into the world of independence as viable, productive, and self directed young adults. Nkenge is responsible for overseeing all operations of the house, implementing programs and services, and ensuring compliance with protocols and procedures. She is also tasked with encouraging staff and youth, engaging parents, and serving as the primary liaison between Renaissance and local community organizations.



### **Charlotte Richardson—Interim Superintendent of the Youth Services Center**

Charlotte has been employed with the Department of Youth Rehabilitation Services (formerly Youth Services Administration/YSA) for seven years and the District of Columbia Government for more than 20 years (having worked with the Department of Mental Health and Child and Family Services Agencies). Prior to the interim assignment, Charlotte worked as Deputy Superintendent of Social Services at the Youth Services Center (YSC).

## Summit Date Change

All great plans come with their own unique set of challenges. In this instance, we were recently informed of delays in the construction schedule for the new DYRS facility in Laurel. With the revised schedule, however, we are left with no choice but to slightly delay the DYRS Employee Summit, as well as the official opening of the new facility itself. At this time, we are looking toward the month of April to schedule these activities, and we will keep you informed with new dates as soon as we have more information. Thank you for your patience and flexibility.



**Government of the District of Columbia**  
Department of Youth Rehabilitation Services